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TAGS: [SENV](#) [ENRG](#) [PREL](#) [KGHG](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: CLIMATE CHANGE: SENIOR JAPANESE MOE OFFICIAL

COMMENTS ON DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Classified By: EMIN Robert F. Cekuta, reasons 1.4 b and d

¶1. (C) Ministry of Environment Deputy Director General for Global Environment Masaru Moriya discussed preparations for the Major Economies Forum leaders meeting and progress towards a post-2012 agreement on climate change in the UNFCCC when he met with EMIN and EST Chief July 1. Moriya said the standoff between developed and developing countries over a global emissions reduction target is the number one issue for the Major Economies Forum. He also highlighted the question of a legally binding emissions reduction target for developing countries as a key concern facing leaders. In this regard, he said China's domestic political cycle, i.e., the development and approval of a new five year plan and the meeting of the National Peoples Congress in 2010, may indeed hamper its ability/willingness to make the needed international commitments. According to Moriya, China may include emissions reductions in its economic plan, but not until after the 2010 Communist Party assembly.

¶2. (C) While seeking to engage China and India to make the progress needed in the international talks on climate change, Moriya said the GOJ has not had the sort of communication with key climate policy makers in either India or China that it would have liked. India, Moriya continued, is still in the process of filling the positions on its climate team following national elections earlier this year. With China, Moriya said the lack of English fluency of China's senior-most climate official makes good communication -- and negotiation -- difficult.

¶3. (C) Turning to Japan's domestic situation and its potential impact on the climate talks, Moriya said the mid-term target of a 15 percent reduction by 2020 Prime Minister Aso has announced would not be GOJ policy until it is approved by the Cabinet. The plan, however, is that such approval would come after a new international climate change treaty is reached. Moriya's view is that the 15 percent mid-term target is a minimum and Japan will make deeper reductions once land use, land use change, and forestry (LULUCF) and emissions credits are included. Again, the Cabinet will likely wait until after Copenhagen to approve Japan's mid-term target, when there is international agreement on how to include LULUCF and emissions credits in a post-2012 climate framework. However, he cautioned that cuts beyond Aso's announced goal will depend on the results of the UNFCCC negotiations and Japanese domestic politics.

¶4. (C) Looking further at the country's politics and climate change, Moriya said while the Japanese public would probably consider climate change as among the "top five" pressing

issues, the economic crisis and pension problems are much more important to voters. Regarding the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), he said the DPJ can take more forward leaning positions as an opposition party. It also has members from across the political spectrum and thus views within the DPJ on climate change-related issues may not always be consistent. However, if the DPJ gains power, it will have to face reality and deal with key industries opposed to emissions caps; here he singled out steel and the electrical utilities. He also added a DPJ government's position on climate could depend on whether former DPJ President Katsuya Okada, who advocates aggressive targets, secures a cabinet position.

¶5. (C) Raising the climate change legislation that just passed the House, Moriya noted reports regarding provisions concerning possible trade measures against countries that do not act to limit greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 in the Waxman-Markey bill had caused some concern in Japan. Moriya said Japan currently only has a voluntary cap-and-trade system and wondered whether Japan might be subject to penalties under such a provision.

ZUMWALT